THE LIMITS OF LOVE

A Reflection on Infinite Love and Finite Hearts

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A Reflection on Infinite Love and Finite Hearts

Part III of the Agapism Series

The Agapism Series:
The Essence of Existence (Part I)
The Cost of Love (Part II)
The Limits of Love (Part III)

Dedication

To the tired lovers those who have given until they had nothing left to give, who have loved until their hearts felt thin, who have reached their limits and wondered if that meant they had failed.

To the protectors of the self, those who have learned that saying “no” can be holy, that stepping back can be sacred, that preserving your soul is not selfishness, but stewardship.

To every human who has stood at the edge of their capacity and realized that love, in its infinity, still requires finite vessels.

This book is for you, for the brave who understand that recognizing our limits is not surrender, but the beginning of wisdom.

Preface: The Third Truth

In *The Essence of Existence*, I wrote that love is limitless.
In *The Cost of Love*, I wrote that love is expensive.

Both are true, but as I continued to think, reflect, and observe life, another question began to surface quietly, honestly, and persistently:

If love is limitless, why do we reach a point where we feel we cannot love anymore?

This book is not a denial of love. It is not a retreat from Agapism. It is the **third pillar** of the philosophy: the grounding truth that completes the first two.

Love may be infinite, but the human heart is not, and ignoring that truth does not make us more loving, it breaks us.

This volume is an honest conversation about the space between what love is and what we are able to carry. It explores the sacred geography of our humanity where the infinite call of love meets the finite reality of the human vessel.

If the first book was the **call**, and the second the **cost**, this book is the **wisdom**, the map for how to answer that call, pay that cost, and still remain whole.

It is written for those who have loved to the edge of themselves and need permission to step back, breathe, and love again differently, wisely, sustainably.

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Love Is Limitless, We Are Not

Love, in its pure essence, has no boundaries, it does not count, it does not measure, it does not grow tired, but we do.

The most painful mistake we make in the name of Agapism is assuming that because love is infinite, we must also be infinite in our ability to give it. That belief has broken many hearts mine included.

To say love is limitless is not to say humans are. We are fragile beings with emotional thresholds, psychological ceilings, and physical exhaustion. When we ignore this truth, love becomes distorted into self-destruction. We turn the greatest gift into a weapon against ourselves.

The philosopher Simone Weil wrote that "attention is the rarest and purest form of generosity." But attention is a finite resource. To love is to pay attention to another, to God, to the world, and like any currency, it can be depleted.

Love does not fail when we reach our limits. We fail when we pretend we do not have any.

This chapter is permission to be human. To acknowledge that our capacity to love is both glorious and limited, and that in acknowledging those limits, we do not betray love, we honor the reality of the vessel through which it must flow.

When Love Meets Evil

One of the hardest questions any philosophy of love must face is this: What happens when love encounters cruelty? There are people who harm without remorse. Systems that exploit, dehumanize, and destroy. Actions that love alone cannot undo.

To love does not mean to excuse evil, to forgive does not mean to forget, to show compassion does not mean to surrender justice.

Love reaches a necessary limit when continuing to give it enables destruction, this is where Agapism meets discernment.

Dostoevsky understood this tension at the bone. In *The Brothers Karamazov*, Ivan rebels not against God, but against a theological system where the suffering of innocent children is the price for eternal harmony. His refusal is not a rejection of

love, but a demand that love be just. Here, love's limit is drawn at the edge of complicity.

Sometimes, the most loving act is resistance. Sometimes, distance is an act of love not hatred. Sometimes, love must say, "*This far, and no further.*" This is not a failure of love, but its maturation. Love without truth becomes sentimentality and sentimentality can be cruel in its own way.

The Limits of Forgiveness

Forgiveness is often spoken of as infinite, a spiritual obligation without end, but forgiveness forced too early becomes violence against the self.

There are wounds that need time, betrayals that require distance, pains that must be fully acknowledged before they can be released.

Forgiveness is not forgetting, it is not denial, it is not obligation.

Love does not demand that you bleed endlessly to prove your goodness.
Even the Abrahamic traditions recognize this sacred tension:

> God is **Al-Ghafur** (The All-Forgiving) in Islam, yet also **Al-Adl** (The Just).
> Christianity speaks of God's boundless mercy, yet calls for repentance.
> Judaism's **teshuvah** requires genuine turning, not just empty words.

Forgiveness has a rhythm, and forcing it breaks the soul. The limit here is not in love's capacity to forgive, but in the requirement for the wound to be acknowledged and the process to be honored. To forgive before you have grieved is to build a house on a cracked foundation.

This chapter is for those who have been told to "just forgive" and found it hollow. Your timing is sacred. Your process is holy. Love includes the space to heal.

When Loving Becomes Losing Yourself

Love becomes dangerous when it asks for the erasure of the self.

There is nothing sacred about disappearing in the name of love, nothing holy about enduring abuse, nothing noble about losing your identity to keep someone else comfortable.

In *The Cost of Love*, I wrote that love has boundaries. Here, I go further: Without boundaries, love stops being love and becomes surrender.

Self-love is not selfish. It is the ground upon which all other love stands. You cannot pour from a cup that is constantly being emptied. Self-love is the act of recognizing the cup's finite volume and choosing to refill it is not a pause in loving others; it is the maintenance of the very vessel that makes love possible.

This is Agapism applied inwardly: if the essence of existence is to love, then that must include the existence looking back at you in the mirror, to neglect that love is to undermine the entire philosophy.

Agape is a river that nourishes both banks. If you are giving everything and the other side is only stone, you are not in a relationship you are in an erosion. Loving wisely means knowing when to build a levee to preserve the land of your own soul.

Loving God with Finite Faith

Even faith has limits, there are moments when prayers feel unanswered. When belief feels heavy, when loving God feels more like endurance than joy.

This does not mean love has disappeared, it means faith is human.

> Islam teaches that *"Allah does not burden a soul beyond that it can bear"* (Qur'an 2:286).
> Christianity acknowledges that *"the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak"* (Matthew 26:41).
> Judaism is built on wrestling with God (the name *Israel* means "one who struggles with God"), not pretending certainty.

To struggle is not to fail, to question is not to abandon love. This chapter is an ode to what I call **The Faithful Doubt**. It is the love that stays in the questioning. Your finite faith with all its doubts, fatigue, and dry seasons is enough. It is the authentic

offering of a human heart, not an angel's. And in its honesty, it may be the most sacred love of all.

What Remains at the Edge of Love

When you reach your limit, something important happens, you learn that love does not ask for annihilation, it asks for honesty. You learn that stepping back can be an act of care. That silence can be protection. That rest is not betrayal.

At the edge of love, wisdom begins. You discover that the goal of love is not perfection, it is presence, it is effort, it is returning when you are able. Love does not require infinity from us only sincerity.

The Japanese art of *Kintsugi* returns to us here, in this final chapter. The bowl is most beautiful not when it was unbroken, but after it has been shattered and repaired with gold. Our limits are those cracks. Our wisdom, our self-care, our honest prayers, these are the gold. The breaking did not destroy the vessel; it created the opportunity for a more resilient, more exquisite whole.

To recognize your limits is not to love less, it is to love lastingly.

Author's Note

This third book completes a journey that began with a simple, heartfelt conviction: that love is what makes life meaningful.

The Essence of Existence was that conviction declared.
The Cost of Love was that conviction tested.
The Limits of Love is that conviction matured.

I wrote this not as an expert, but as a fellow traveler. I have reached my own limits. I have loved until I was empty, forgiven when I was not ready, and doubted when I wanted to believe. This book is the map I wish I'd had.

If Agapism is to be a living philosophy not just a beautiful idea, it must make room for the human being who is trying to live it. That means acknowledging fatigue, recognizing evil, honoring the slow pace of healing, and sacredly protecting the self.

This is not a softening of the philosophy, but its strengthening. A love that ignores human frailty is a love that will eventually break its adherents. A love that acknowledges limits is a love that can endure for a lifetime.

Thank you for walking this three-part path with me. May you love infinitely from the honest truth of your finite, beautiful, and enough human heart.

About the Author

Abdullahi Abdulrazaq is a philosopher and writer whose work explores the intersection of love, meaning, and human limitation. Through his **Agapism Series**, he has developed a contemporary philosophy of life that begins with love as the essential purpose and culminates in the wisdom of loving sustainably.

He holds a degree in Computer Science and a Master's in Information Technology, an analytical background that informs his structured approach to existential questions. His writing is characterized by its theological depth, philosophical integration, and accessible, heartfelt prose.

He writes for seekers, believers, doubters, and anyone who has ever loved deeply enough to wonder how to keep loving without losing themselves.